

State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

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Situation Report for August 5, 2007

(issued @ 1500 hrs.)



2007 FIRES

Report Includes:

- Background Information
 - Fire Restrictions & Closures
 - Air Quality
 - Road Closures/Travel Restrictions
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Important Websites:

State of Montana Fire Information:

<http://mt.gov/fire.asp>

National Interagency Fire Center

http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm

Northern Rockies Coordination Center

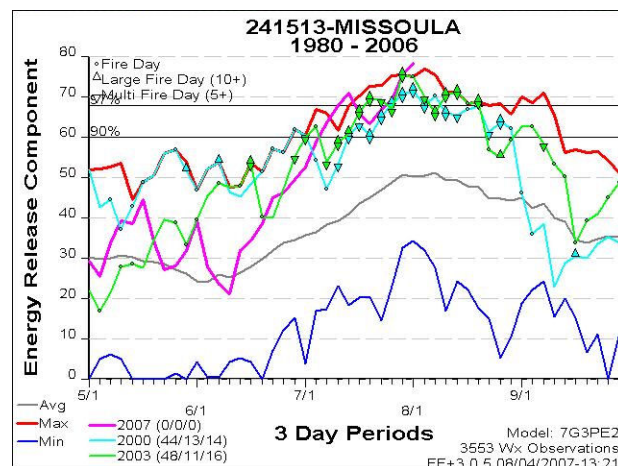
<http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>

I. Background Information

Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture.

Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied some of these fronts but a return to a high pressure system mitigates any moisture that fell. The weather forecasts project a continuing of the high pressure systems through August and possible into September.

The Missoula RAWS is showing an all-time record ERC level (see graph).



Fire Restrictions & Closures: Portions of the state are currently under Stage I or Stage II Fire Restrictions. For definitions of these restrictions, see:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stageI.pdf>

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stageII.pdf>

Fire Restrictions in effect for specific areas:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>

Air Quality & Smoke: The Montana Department of Environmental Quality issues a daily forecast and discussion of potential smoke impacts throughout the state. The forecast can be accessed at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/fireupdates/index.asp>.

Road Closures & Travel Restrictions:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/reports/alerts.shtml>

Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

[Current Fire Restrictions](#)

[Drought & Fire Updates](#)

[Drought & Fire News](#)

II. Current Incident Situation - Incidents listed according to current NRCG priority. *(This report includes summary information for Montana fires that are currently greater than 100 acres in size. Fires are being dropped from this report once they reach 100% containment)*

The Northern Rockies Coordination Center (Missoula) has assigned an Area Command Team (Zimmerman) to help analyze assessments for long duration fires and emerging incidents.

Jocko Lakes is located on the CSKT lands (Flathead Agency, BIA), twenty-six miles NE of Missoula; 8 miles W of Seeley Lake.



Photo by TOM BAUER/Missoulian

McNitt's Type 2 IMT is in command. Personnel assigned: 91 plus mutual aid fire department resources. The fire has burned an estimated 8,000 acres in timber, litter, and under-story. Extreme fire behavior reported with torching and long-range spotting. Structures are threatened. Community of Seeley Lake is threatened. Evacuations are in place. Highway 83 is closed.

Skyland is located on the Flathead NF near Summit. LaFave's Type 2 IMT (Pendleton's Type 1 IMT ordered) is assigned. Fire is estimated at 30,457 acres with 2% containment. Personnel assigned: 954. Two structures are confirmed lost.

Evacuations have occurred. Cause: Lightning. Fire has burned about 5,700 acres on the Blackfeet Nation.

Chippy Creek, is located forty-two miles southwest of Kalispell, and 24 miles N of Thompson Falls, MT (Northwestern Land Office, Montana DNRC). Raley's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Size is 36,140 acres. 0% containment. Personnel assigned: 203. Cause: Under Investigation. Structures are threatened. Evacuations are in effect. Burning in timber and under-story. Extreme fire behavior with crowning and long range spotting.

Ahorn Fire on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County being managed by Whitney's Type 1 Team. Current size is estimated at 43,900 acres. 2% Containment. Personnel Assigned: 640. Cause: Lightning. Structures are threatened. Evacuations in effect.

Meriwether located on the Helena National Forest, in the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness. Oltrogge's Type 1 IMT's is managing this fire. Current size is estimated at 38,685 acres with 35% containment. Personnel Assigned: 323. Cause: Lightning. Fire behavior has moderated from the previous few days.

Sawmill Complex is located on the Lolo NF. The complex includes a total of 10,340,660 acres with 0% containment and consists of the Sawmill Creek, the Wyman #2, and the Fisher Point fires. Heintz's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 418. Cause: Lightning. Structures threatened. Evacuations are in effect. **A Community Meeting will be held at the Clark Ranch tonight @ 7pm.**

Mile Marker 124 is located 3 miles east of Clinton. The fire is 6,245 acres with 60% containment. Angell's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 425. Structures are threatened. Cause: Under investigation. Traffic restrictions are still in place on Interstate 90. Three major power lines have been restored. Cell towers and an aircraft navigational beacon have restored with temporary power. Evacuations are in effect for Cramer Creek.

Brush Creek is located on the Flathead NF, twenty-five miles west of Whitefish, MT. Brush Creek is 15,981 acres with 0% containment. Koehler's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 281. Cause: Lightning. Structures are threatened. Road and recreation site closures. Evacuations are in effect.

Rombo Mountain WFU, Bitterroot NF. Eighteen miles south of Darby, MT. Svalberg's Fire Use Management Team is assigned. Estimated size is 830 acres. Personnel assigned: 65. Structures are threatened. Active fire behavior.

Fool Creek on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests in Lewis and Clark County, approximately 30 miles NW of Choteau, is now 29,857 acres. Personnel assigned: 142. Cause: Lightning. Larsen's Type III Team is assigned. Structures remain threatened.

Owl on Yellowstone NP and Gallatin NF. Wilder's Type II IMT will transfer command back to YNP tomorrow. The Owl Fire is 2,800 acres. 85% contained. Personnel assigned: 181. Cause: Lightning. Smoldering.

Garceau on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Transitioned to a Type 3 IMT today. 3,045 acres and 95% contained. Personnel assigned: 80. Cause: Lightning. Timber and grass. Mopping-up interior hot spots.

Porcupine is located in the Gallatin National Forest, approximately 31 miles north of Livingston. Size is 124 acres at 20 percent contained. Personnel assigned: 20.

Pattengail Creek on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. 10 miles NE of Wisdom. The Pattengail Creek Fire is 3,800 acres and 20% contained. Type 3 Incident Organization. Personnel assigned: 27. Cause: Lightning. Active fire behavior with crown runs and short-range spotting.

Conger Creek on the Lolo National Forest, 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is 5,000 acres with 0% containment. Type 3 Incident Organization. Structures are threatened. Personnel Assigned: 12. Cause: Lightning. Moderate fire behavior with crown runs.

Railley Mountain on the Flathead NF is 15 miles northeast of Seeley Lake. A previously reported confine/contain incident. The Railley Mountain Fire is 1,631 acres and 0% contained. Two structures are threatened. Personnel assigned: 12. Cause: Lightning.

NEW LARGE FIRES (Large fires are fires over 100 acres in size)

Cutt Coulee in Custer County, MT Eastern Land Office County Assist. The Cutt Coulee Fire is 1,400 acres and 100% contained.

For more information on Montana Fires: <http://www.inciweb.org/state/27/>.

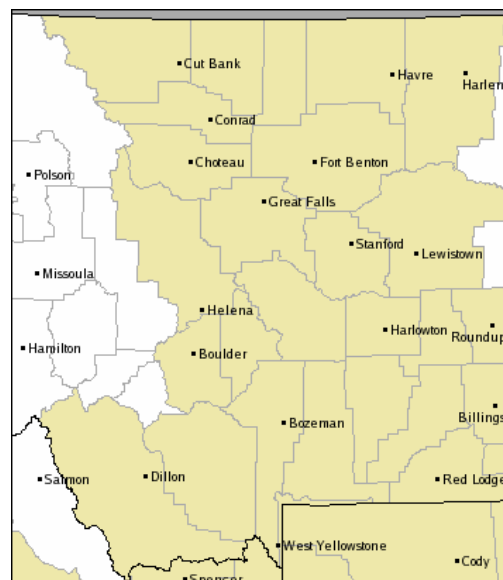
III. Weather

Red Flag Warnings or Fire Weather Watches:

No Red Flag Warnings or Fire Weather Watches have been issued for today. A Hazardous Weather forecast for smoke has been issued (See Map).

Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning:

A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased



fire danger.

A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours.

<http://www.weather.gov/>

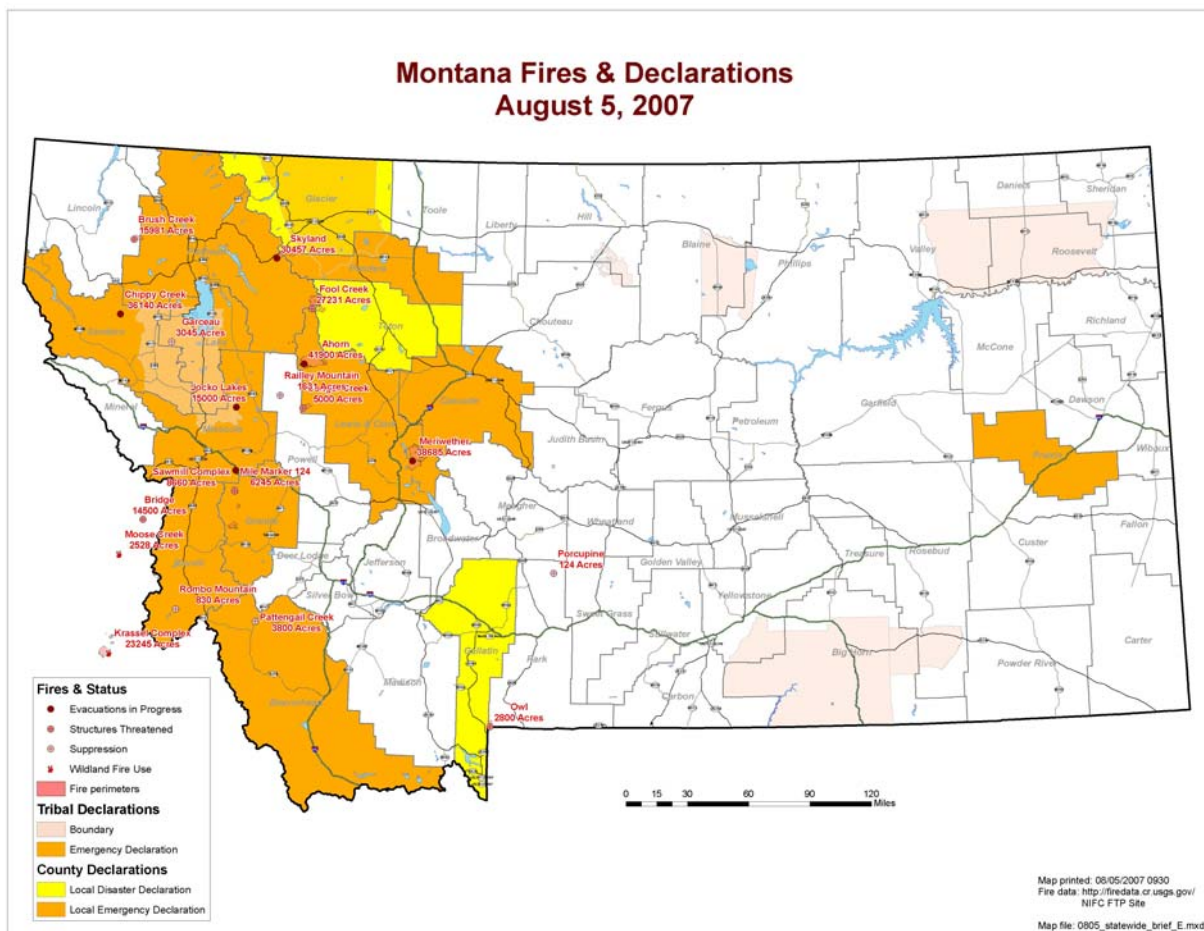
Weather Forecast For current Fire Weather Predictions, see the Daily Outlook at:
http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf.

Fire Behavior Forecast For current Fire Behavior Predictions, see:
http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf

IV. State Declarations

- Statewide Declaration of a Wildland Fire Emergency

V. Local and Tribal Declarations



- **State of Emergency.** The following jurisdictions have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark
Lake
Cascade
Flathead
Prairie
Pondera

Ravalli
Granite
Missoula
Sanders
Beaverhead
Blackfeet Nations

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following jurisdictions have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton
Glacier

Gallatin

VI. Jurisdictional Emergency Operations

- The Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operation Center was activated on July 19, 2007. Deactivated on August 5, 2007.
- The Blackfeet Nation has activated and staffed their Emergency Operations Center (7/30/07).
- The Glacier County Emergency Operations Center was activated on July 30, 2007.
- The Flathead County Emergency Operations Center was activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Teton County Emergency Operations Center was partially activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Pondera County Emergency Operations Center was partially activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Missoula County Emergency Operations Center is mobile and working in the Seeley Lake area effective 8/4/07.

VII. Requests for State Financial Assistance

- N/A

VIII. Summary of State Resources Committed

- MT-DES currently has two employees deployed with Incident Management Teams (through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center).
- MT-DES also has deployed an Agency Representative to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk modules have been deployed for initial attack to:
 - Kalispell
 - Missoula
 - Helena

- One Montana Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook and module has been deployed to assist Oltrogge's Type 1 Team with fire support on the Meriwether Fire.
- Montana Army National Guard Security Teams (28 personnel) has been assigned to:
 - Mile Marker 124 Fire.
 - Meriwether Fire
 - Sawmill Complex
 - Jocko Lake (2 teams)
- Montana Highway Patrol resources are assigned assist in traffic control and law enforcement support of large fires.
- Starting on July 20, 2007, at 0700 the SECC was activated and staffed to a Level III status with extended hours (0700-1900). We remain at Level III. Outside of those hours, the MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.

IX. Fire Management Assistance Grants

- Jocko Lakes FEMA-2718FM-MT approved 8/4/07

X. Emergency Management Assistance Compact Resources Committed (through the SECC)

- EMAC A Team is assigned to the MT State Emergency Coordination Center.